



FACT SHEET MEDIA GUIDELINES FOR DRUG COURT COORDINATORS

National studies show that the public gets most of its information about courts from the news media. This makes the media the court's ally in educating the public about the value of drug courts. A variety of media and public outreach ideas, samples, and tools are available in the AOC's handbook *Dialogue, Courts Reaching Out to Their Communities, A Handbook for Creating and Enhancing Court and Community Collaboration* at www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/community/handbook.htm

Following are general tips for communicating effectively with the media. A list of local court staff with public information responsibilities is attached and can also be found at www.courtinfo.ca.gov/presscenter/presscontacts.htm

Develop a Media Relations Program for Your Drug Court

Develop a Media Policy

The first step is to develop a media policy that is supported by the presiding judge. This policy can be just a few sentences, but it should include a clear statement as to how the court will officially communicate with the media. Here is a sample policy:

- (1) Designated drug court staff will answer all incoming press calls on a timely basis, and will convey accurate information on court proceedings, within the rules of confidentiality that govern court proceedings.
- (2) Presiding judges and their designees are the official spokespersons for drug court.
- (3) The court may only provide the following information about court proceedings: (include information about your drug court while following federal confidentiality laws).
- (4) The court will develop Fact Sheets for the media that will clearly explain the purpose, function, and history of drug court, and the various proceedings that are under its jurisdiction. Media also can be referred to the California Courts Web site at www.courtinfo.ca.gov for general information about California's drug court programs.
- (5) The court will provide orientation sessions for new reporters who cover drug courts to educate them on the drug court system.

Create a Media Contact List

Develop an updated media list for your area. Use the phone book or the Internet to compile a list of reporters and media outlets that may be interested in covering stories involving drug

court participants. Be sure to include legal affairs reporters of your local newspapers, including legal publications and daily, weekly, ethnic, alternative, and community newspapers. Also include the news directors and reporters of local news radio stations and television stations. For each entry, include the name, title, media outlet, address, phone number, fax number, and e-mail address.

Designate a Media Spokesperson

Courts have found that designating media spokespersons can be very helpful in developing positive relationships with a wide range of media representatives. First, it ensures that the court maintains uniformity and accuracy in the information that is provided. Second, it allows reporters to deal with media liaisons who officially speak for the court. Third, courts have found that such spokespersons can be very effective in managing numerous media calls during high profile cases and in providing accurate information to the media so that they can write balanced stories.

Open the Courtroom

Giving media access to drug court proceedings can improve media understanding of how the courts work and create positive relationships with between reporters and court staff that can contribute to effective stories in the future. Other opportunities to involve the media are special events, such as drug court graduations and anniversaries.

Write Op/Ed Pieces and Commentary

As an expert on drug courts, you and others in the court are in a unique position to write and submit Op/Ed pieces or other commentary to your local newspapers. This will help you establish a relationship with your local newspaper's Editorial Board, and will allow you to deliver your message in your own words and often on your own timeline.

Develop Public Service Announcements (PSA)

Another tool for improving publicity about the drug court is to consider public service announcements (PSAs). Ways to do this include: (1) finding a corporate sponsor—consider those that might need positive press in the wake of negative publicity; (2) piggy-backing on events in the public eye; (3) making a PSA a news item—for example, obtaining a declaration from the Board of Supervisors and reading relevant portions on a PSA.

12 Tips for Talking to Reporters

1. Be responsive by calling back reporters in a timely manner since they are often on tight daily deadlines.
2. It is best not to talk “off the record.” Assume everything you say can be printed.
3. Use simple language that your audience will understand.
4. Do not speculate. If you don't know the answer, tell the reporter that you will call back.
5. You should have a clear idea of what you want to see in print (or on TV/radio). That means having a key message. Write it down and repeat as often as you can.
6. Take the time to think of the all possible questions you'll get asked. Then think of the best answers for each of them.
7. Be honest. You don't need to tell everything you know, but never lie, no matter how difficult the truth might be.

8. The reporter will only be able to use a small portion of what you say. If your answers are long, the reporter will edit what you say to extract the quote(s). If your answers are brief and to the point, then you are helping make that selection.
9. Provide background information that is accurate and current.
10. Direct the reporter to other sources who can talk on the record, such as law school professors, attorneys, or bar association spokespersons.
11. Talk to the reporter about similar cases when you cannot talk about the specific case due to confidentiality.
12. Describe relevant policies and procedures.

Developing Rapport with Reporters

- Notice bylines and initiate contact with reporters who have an interest in children and families and appear to understand the complexity of the issues.
- Call them to discuss their work.
- Invite them to public drug court meetings to introduce them to participants and educate them on agenda topics.
- Collaborate with other court programs to develop ongoing relationships with the press.
- Collaborate with executive branch agencies, such as, social services and probation departments, to do the same.

Statewide Statistics on California's Collaborative Justice Courts

Introduction

In the late 1980s, collaborative justice courts were developed in response to the costly and time consuming approach to dealing with non-violent, substance offenders that were overwhelming the criminal justice system. In contrast to the traditional "revolving door" approach, collaborative justice courts provide an effective solution to drug and drug-related crime through the innovative use of comprehensive supervision, drug testing, judicial monitoring and sanction and incentives. These courts bring the full weight of all intervenors (judges, prosecutors, defense counsel, treatment, probation, law enforcement, correctional personnel and others) to bear, forcing offenders to deal with their substance abuse problems.

The design and structure of collaborative justice courts are developed at the local level to reflect the unique strengths, circumstances and capacities of each community. Currently, there are approximately 248 collaborative justice courts in California including adult and juvenile, domestic violence, homeless, mental health, community, teen/peer, family dependency and re-entry courts.

Research and Statewide Statistics

The recently updated study from Columbia University's prestigious National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) is the first to look at the effectiveness of the adult drug court model on offenders while in a program, as compared to other forms of community supervision. (*Research on Drug Courts: A Critical Review, 2001 Update*), The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University, June, 2001. The study concludes that drug courts provide closer, more comprehensive supervision and much more frequent drug testing and monitoring during the program, than other forms of community supervision. In addition, it found that drug use and criminal behavior are substantially reduced while offenders are participating in drug court. (CASA, 2001)

The following statistics about California's adult criminal courts were compiled from the above-stated article:

- Graduates of Santa Barbara drug court had an average of 0.69 arrests per year while in the program compared with an average of 2.49 arrests for the year prior to entering drug court.
- In Los Angeles, 24% of drug court participants were rearrested up to 12 months post-drug court, compared with 37% of dependants in standard diversion and 51% of felony drug defendants not diverted.

- Felony rearrest rates for a one-year post-drug court period were 6% for graduates and 55% for dropouts, compared with 47% of the comparisons (over an 18-month post-arrest follow-up period) in Monterey California.
- Compared to a matched sample of offenders sentenced to probation, clients admitted in 1997 and 1998 to the Orange County, California drug court had lower rearrest rates while in the program (17% vs, 35%).
- Also, in Orange County, for low-and medium-risk offenders the in-program rearrest rate of 16% was lower than the probation comparison sample of 22%. The high risk clients in the drug court program also had significantly lower rearrest rates than those on probation: 19% vs. 38%

Innovative Strategies Between California's Collaborative Justice Courts and Their Communities

A recent Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) *Program Brief* identified nine promising components for a collaborative, multidisciplinary problem-solving approach to dealing with non-violent, substance abusing offenders. Many of California's collaborative justice courts have developed innovative practices with their local communities. These innovative practices also reflect BJA's promising components but few outside the local court or county are aware of these initiatives. Described below are several of the creative problem-solving approaches developed by California's collaborative justice courts that match BJA's promising components.

Acknowledge Court Role in Service Coordination

The court's role in service collaboration builds a strong foundation for court-community agency interaction. The Los Angeles County Homeless Court's Program seeks to fight homelessness by empowering homeless people with the tools for self-sufficiency. The purpose of the homeless program is to identify and treat the underlying causes of criminal behavior therapeutically. Working in conjunction with the City Attorney's office, the Los Angeles Superior Court partners with various shelters each month where the client receives a variety of services, including: housing, health, substance abuse, mental health, legal, vocational and adult education, personal care, family reunification, and referral services. Three months after the client receives services, the case is brought back to the Superior Court where it is dismissed. The client receives a certificate of completion from the Superior Court. **Contact: Los Angeles Superior Court, Bettina Rodriquez, Division Chief, 213-974-6531.**

Judicial Leadership

Like all mental health courts in California, the judge is the center of the treatment and supervision process. The San Joaquin County Superior Court implemented a Mental Health Drug Court (MHDC) that provides a comprehensive and intensive treatment program with a broad continuum of services to meet the specific needs of mentally ill substance abusing adults. One of the program goals is to have 80% of all homeless and at-risk participants placed in a structured housing/treatment facility that provides living skills education. The San Joaquin County Superior Court has contracted with Treatment House to provide homeless and at-risk clients with a safe living environment and on-site group meetings with AA/NA discussions. The program allows clients to concentrate on their recovery needs while learning basic living skills that will enable them to become self-sufficient. **Contact: San Joaquin County Superior Court, DeEtte Goni, Grants Accountant, 209-468-8279.**

An Active Policy Committee of Stakeholders

A central goal of the San Francisco Domestic Violence Court is to discuss issues of relevance to all the agencies providing services to the court. Several policy-making committees exist to monitor service providers and to ensure that defendants are receiving appropriate supervision and services.

The Drug and Domestic Violence Committee is empowered to make policy decisions, but does not oversee the daily operations of the court. The Batterer Intervention Program Advisory Committee, and its subcommittee, the Family Violence Council meet regularly to share ideas and make programmatic improvements. A full-time analyst evaluates the procedures, works closely with probation to develop monitoring forms, and re-structures processes for efficiency. **Contact: San Francisco Domestic Violence Court, JoAnn McAllister, Analyst 415-551-3714 or Judge Harold Kahn, 415-551-4020.**

Case-Level Service Coordinators

A case coordinator can overcome the potential problems of information exchange resulting from multiple individuals and organizations. Yolo County's Juvenile Violence Court (JVC) is a therapeutic model between the Yolo Superior Court and the Yolo County Probation Department. This highly structured program with intensive supervision stresses accountability. Juveniles appear monthly in court. Each minor's school attendance is monitored daily, as well as other delinquent behavior at home or with affiliated gang activity. All minors are required to attend 12 weeks of anger management classes, facilitated peer meetings on various subjects and to attend field trips to the California Youth Authority Diversion/Reality Check and to San Quentin's Squire Program for Minors At Risk. Parents are strongly encouraged to attend parenting groups. **Contact: Yolo Juvenile Violence Court, Kathlyn Lamore, Coordinator, 530-666-8377.**

Centralized Access to Service Network

The Downtown Community Court Pilot Project serves as a central resource for referrals or mandates for services. The project was implemented in the Central Division of the San Diego Superior Court in October of 2002. The Downtown Community Court Pilot Project focuses on offenders who commit and are convicted of low-level "quality of life" crimes in the downtown area to perform community work services under the supervision of the Downtown Partnership's Clean and Safe Program (a non-profit association of downtown businesses). The community work service is performed in areas where Clean and Safe presently operate. This community work service is ordered in lieu of standard fines, with an average of two to three days of community work service ordered. Work service involves painting out graffiti, picking up trash, planting trees or other community work. Upon successful completion of community work service, the offender's criminal case may be dismissed. The Court, along with the City Attorney, Public Defender and San Diego Downtown Partnership have collaborated on the formation and implementation of this program. Seed money was obtained by the Downtown Partnership from local property owners and the County Board of Supervisors. **Contact: Downtown San Diego Partnership, Tilisha Martin, Community Court Coordinator, 619-234-8900**

Creative Use of Resources

Creativity is often required by programs to obtain services or to increase funding. The San Bernardino Adult Drug Court requires a GED, enrollment in continuing education classes and full employment. The Department of Education provides a full time GED instructor who teaches at the treatment facility. The Probation Department provides a part-time retired probation officer to assist with college enrollment. As a result, over 57% of the probationers in drug court enroll in college. **Contact: San Bernardino Adult Drug Court, Deborah Cima, Coordinator 909-387-4730**



**The Superior Court of California
County of San Francisco
(415) 553-9855**



GORDON PARK-LI
Chief Executive Officer

Criminal Division
850 Bryant Street, Room 201
San Francisco, CA 94103

**California Supreme Court Chief Justice Ronald George to
Speak at San Francisco Drug Court Graduation**

December 11, 2002
For Immediate Release

Contact: Anne Marie Engel
(415) 553-9855

San Francisco Superior Court Adult Drug Court will hold its next graduation on Tuesday December 17, 2002 at 2:00 pm in Department 22 of the San Francisco Hall of Justice at 850 Bryant Street. The guest speaker will be Ronald George, Chief Justice of the California Supreme Court. Other speakers include San Francisco Supervisor Tom Ammiano, San Francisco Superior Court Presiding Judge Ronald Quidachay, San Francisco District Attorney Terence Hallinan and San Francisco Public Defender Kimiko Burton. This will be the largest graduation in the Drug Court's 8-year history with over fifty graduates who will be honored for their completion of the Drug Court's intensive substance abuse treatment program. The graduates have a combined total of over 800 years of drug abuse. Many have been in and out of jails and prisons their entire adult lives. A large number of the graduates were homeless upon entering Drug Court and now have stable housing. Most were unemployed upon entering Drug Court and now nearly all either have jobs or are in school. In addition, several of the graduates have been reunited with their children while they have been in Drug Court. All have turned their lives around, with the assistance of Drug Court, and have gone from having severe addictions and frequent contact with the criminal justice system to leading lives free of drugs and crime.

The San Francisco Drug Court has been diverting non-violent drug offenders into treatment rather than prison or jail since 1995, well before the passage of Proposition 36. Drug Court, both a pre- and post-adjudication felony program, works in conjunction with Proposition 36, but targets a population with more severe criminal records and addictions. The Department of Public Health is responsible for program management of both Drug Court and Proposition 36 ensuring that criminal justice and treatment programs are handled in the most effective manner.

San Francisco Drug Court is extremely honored that Chief Justice George will be the keynote speaker at next week's graduation. Although he has been an ardent advocate for drug courts throughout California, the Chief Justice has never previously spoken at a drug court ceremony. George is a graduate of Princeton University and Stanford Law School. He has been a

judge for the past 30 years, serving successively in the Los Angeles Municipal Court (1972-1977), Los Angeles Superior Court (1977-1987), the California Court of Appeal (1987-1991) and California Supreme Court (1991-present). He is the chair of the California Judicial Council, the organization that establishes policies and procedures for California's judiciary. He is the president-elect of the Conference of Chief Justices and Chair-Elect of the Board of Directors of the National Center for State Courts. George is also the author of numerous publications and the recipient of many awards. This year he received the William H. Rehnquist Award for Judicial Excellence.

The five other distinguished speakers at the graduation are well known and respected in San Francisco's criminal justice community. All five— Judge Quidachay, Supervisor Ammiano, Chief Cervantes, District Attorney Hallinan, and Public Defender Burton—have been important supporters of the San Francisco Drug Court. Collectively their presence at the graduation demonstrates the strong commitment that San Francisco has to its Drug Court.

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Drug Court Graduation

San Francisco Superior Court

Remarks by Chief Justice Ronald M. George

December 17, 2002

Good afternoon. I am very pleased to participate in this very important event. The individuals whose graduation we are here to celebrate have overcome many difficulties and obstacles to stand here, and — like your friends, family members — we in the

judicial system are all very proud of what you have achieved.

The concept of a drug court was first introduced in the early 1990's. Today, there are 158 drug courts functioning in 50 of California's 58 counties. San Francisco's program, which began only 7 years ago, will graduate some 400 individuals this year.

Drug courts are different. They require courts and judges to step outside the confines of their traditional roles and work in close partnership with other participants

in the justice system — and with defendants themselves. In fact, everyone involved — judges, lawyers, defendants, and support services — must rethink their roles and act differently. What has been remarkable has been the way so many individuals have met these challenges and exceeded all expectations.

Drug courts concentrate on a focused goal: reducing repeat offenses by providing individually-tailored services and responses to assist offenders who have drug abuse

problems. That sounds very abstract — but success is easy to measure: Consider the effect on the lives of individuals who appear before drug courts and on the lives of their families. In other words, look at the graduates we honor today, and those who are here to applaud them.

Since becoming Chief Justice of California in 1996, I have had the opportunity to visit several drug courts, and the privilege of attending some very memorable and moving graduation

ceremonies. I have met with quite a few drug court graduates, like those in this room. Their success stories are truly inspiring.

Graduates of drug courts have returned to school, earned degrees, found stable housing, gotten off the unemployment and welfare rolls, found new jobs, and once again become productive members of their communities.

Many graduates have been reunited with children who had been removed from the care of their parents because of parental

addiction or drug-related crimes. Many of these graduates are passing their wisdom on to other persons, by helping in drug rehabilitation and drug court programs.

It is no secret to any of us in this room that drug and alcohol abuse plays an enormous role in a majority of the criminal, family, and juvenile cases that come before our courts. Substance abuse affects more than the abuser — it affects his or her family, friends, and community. And that in part is what drug court programs help to

address — the variety of effects that a drug abuser's actions can have, including the neglect or abuse of a child, domestic violence, criminal activity engaged in to support an addiction, and the impoverishment of a family.

Drug court programs afford courts the opportunity to look beyond the criminal act that brings an individual into contact with the court system and to consider the larger context of his or her life — as well as the future of that individual in the

community — rather than having to resort to unproductive incarceration.

Drug courts have been successful in large part because they are built upon a collaborative model. Historically, courts viewed their role as distinct from that of other agencies within the justice system. The court served as decision-maker. A defendant's life beyond his or her offense was relevant primarily for sentencing purposes — and once an offender was sentenced, the courts expected to have no

further contact with the individual unless he or she re-offended.

The drug court model takes a very different view of the role of the courts. For the model to succeed, it requires courts to join with district attorneys, public defenders, and court administrators, as well as treatment specialists, community services, and the probation department, in working with the defendant.

The promise of this new approach has been recognized not only in California, but across our nation. In 2000, the Conference of Chief Justices — an organization of which I am President-elect and which includes the Chief Justices of every state in the union — adopted a resolution supporting the development of these courts.

In California, we increasingly have been developing a broader definition and potential application of what has come to be

called “collaborative justice.” This term includes a number of innovative court programs that are aimed at improving access to services for individuals, while providing better protection for the public and enabling more members of society to be productive.

San Francisco has initiated specialized programs that include not only drug courts, but also domestic violence and unified family courts, and plans for a mental health court.

Whenever I encounter individuals involved in the operation of a drug court project or another collaborative court setting, I always am struck by their enthusiasm and their devotion — what, in fact, often amounts to zeal on their part.

The drug court movement is one that requires vision from all participants. It asks of you something that the court system does not frequently call upon us to do — to believe in the possibility of real change and in the positive power of education, support,

and personal commitment, and to recognize that a transformation in one part of an individual's life can have a profound effect on every part.

There are many challenges that lie ahead for the courts in general and for our nation as a whole. A historic budget crisis, uncertainty about personal security, balancing individual rights and the need for safety — all these provide part of the background of our daily lives. You who

graduate today will have many day-to-day challenges to face — but you now have new tools and resources to help you do so successfully.

In a time of uncertainty and fear, it is truly a pleasure to salute the San Francisco court and its partners in the justice community and the community-at-large for their dedicated efforts to make a true difference in the lives of San Franciscans. In the judicial system, our primary goal is ensuring access and fairness to all who need

the services of the courts. Drug courts are one very important way to give depth and breadth to that commitment, and to help ensure that courts are here to serve every member of our community.

Let me close by thanking the other individuals who have made this event possible — the graduates who have made a commitment to turning their lives around and already have made a difference.

Congratulations to each of you on your achievements to date. And my best wishes

for a happy and healthy holiday season, and
a new year that will bring continued success
and satisfaction.

Thank you again for asking me to join
you here today.

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TAKE A CLOSER LOOK AT YOUR JUSTICE SYSTEM

Court Logo



[Name of Court]

COURTHOUSE TOUR

- * Observe your drug court in session**
- * See how drug courts work for the community**
- * Meet judges, attorneys, and court staff**
- * Learn about career opportunities**
- * Discover courthouse history**

For more information and to schedule a tour, contact: [INSERT name, phone]

For more information contact:
[INSERT name and phone number]

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Take a Closer Look at Your Justice System

Dateline—[INSERT date] [INSERT name of court] is conducting free daily tours of courthouse facilities to show visitors how the justice system works in [area].

According to [INSERT name of spokesperson], visitors can observe court in session; meet judges, attorneys, and court staff; hear about career opportunities; and learn about courthouse history.

“We want to make procedures, laws, and officials of the justice system real for people of all ages and backgrounds,” said [INSERT name]. “By taking a tour of [INSERT name] courthouse, we hope visitors will come away with a better understanding of how the justice system can affect their lives.”

For more information or to schedule a tour, contact [INSERT name, phone].

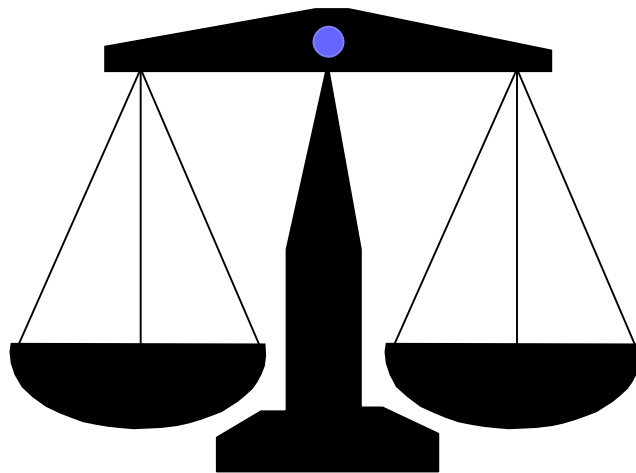
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SAMPLE

The Superior Court of California, County of Orange, Celebrates . . .

NATIONAL DRUG COURT MONTH
April 2003

*A special “thank you” to all past, present and future
drug court judges and staff.*



*Drug Courts —
Working with local community to reduce recidivism with
effective, appropriate treatment options*

SAMPLE

Superior Court of California, County of Orange
CONTACT: Office of the Drug Court Coordinator
Name/Phone Number

NEWS RELEASE

RE: NATIONAL DRUG COURT MONTH: APRIL 2003

ORANGE COUNTY DRUG COURTS CELEBRATE A DECADE OF SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

Drug courts prove highly effective in reducing recidivism

Santa Ana? During April, the Superior Court of Orange County's (fill in number of) drug court programs will celebrate their successes and recognize staff who made significant contributions to these programs with a special packet consisting of a Certificate of Appreciation from Chief Justice Ronald, M. George. Pending plans also include _____. The key message is one of thanks to staff and an acknowledgement of the vital importance of drug court programs.

Drug courts, also known as collaborative justice courts, emphasize achieving justice without using the traditional adversarial process. Eligible participants are identified early and promptly placed in the collaborative justice court program. Collaborative justice courts provide access to a continuum of services, including treatment and rehabilitation services. Participant compliance is monitored frequently.

A coordinated strategy governs the court's responses to participants' compliance, using a system of sanctions and incentives to foster compliance. Ongoing judicial interaction with each collaborative justice court participant is essential. Monitoring and evaluation measure the achievement of program goals and gauge effectiveness.

Effective collaborative justice court operations require continuing interdisciplinary education. Forging partnerships among collaborative justice courts, public agencies, and community-based organizations increases the availability of services, enhances the program's effectiveness, and

generates local support. Effective collaborative justice courts emphasize a team and individual commitment to cultural competency. Awareness of and responsiveness to diversity and cultural issues help ensure an attitude of respect within the collaborative justice court setting.

Funding Programs for Collaborative Justice Courts

Collaborative justice courts receive funding from federal and state sources, as summarized below. Technical assistance is also provided to courts to identify additional funding for collaborative justice programs.

Local Assistance Grants: Funding for collaborative justice courts through the Administrative Office of the Courts local assistance grant program was first offered in 2001–2002.

Collaborative Justice Mini-Grants: Since 1996 federal funding has been made available annually for drug courts and other collaborative justice courts through the California Office of Criminal Justice Planning (OCJP). The Administrative Office of the Courts has administered these pass-through grants, which have provided funding to about 15 to 30 drug courts each year. In fiscal year 2000–2001, the program funded juvenile delinquency, dependency, and family drug courts. In 2001–2002, the program expanded to include youth/peer courts.

State Drug Court Funding: In September 1998, the California Legislature enacted the Drug Court Partnership Act to fund county court systems that develop and implement post-plea drug court programs in order to provide the greatest public safety benefit and the most effective reductions in state and local costs. This legislation established a unique partnership between the state Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs (ADP) and the Judicial Council for the purpose of demonstrating the cost-effectiveness of drug courts. The act has provided \$8 million per year to fund this grants program starting in fiscal year 1998–1999. ADP administers the program in concurrence with the Judicial Council.

In 2000, the state Legislature implemented the Comprehensive Drug Court Implementation Act of 1999, and the Judicial Council and the ADP continue to collaborate and administer the program. This act provides funding to “drug court systems,” including those for (1) juvenile offenders; (2) parents of children who are detained by, or are dependents of, the juvenile court; (3) parents of children in family law cases involving custody and visitation issues; (4) criminal offenders under Penal Code sections 1000.1–1000.5; and (5) other drug court systems approved

by the Drug Court Partnership Executive Steering Committee. The State Budget for fiscal year 2000–2001 provided \$10 million for this program, ensuring its continuation through 2004.

Statewide Perspectives

Developed in the early 1990s as an alternative to traditional criminal prosecution for drug-related offenses, drug treatment courts (a.k.a. drug courts) provided an early model for collaborative justice courts. They combine close judicial supervision with resources available through alcohol and drug treatment services. Two initial goals of drug courts were to reduce recidivism and to tailor the criminal justice system's responses to offenders with drug problems, making these more effective and appropriate.

Drug court programs are more effective than traditional criminal prosecution methods, according to the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance Drug Court Clearinghouse.

Because of the success of their initial implementation experience and increased support, many programs are now expanding their targeted populations. More than 158 drug courts, including adult pre- and post-plea drug courts, juvenile drug courts, and drug courts in juvenile dependency and family courts, operate in California.

This statewide system of drug courts has been integrated into the continuum of court programs for drug offenders in California. With the passage of Proposition 36 (Substance Abuse and Crime Prevention Act) in November 2000, the system evolved to include diversion programs, drug courts, and Prop. 36 court programs. California received the National Drug Court Month award from the National Association of Drug Court Professionals in 2002 in recognition of the many drug court activities and programs being promoted across the state.

Courts receiving grants through the Drug Court Partnership Program participated in an independent evaluation that was completed in March 2002. The effectiveness of these programs was demonstrated in terms of cost, participants' drug use, and criminal involvement, and improved family and vocational indicators. The report is available on the California Courts Web site at www.courtinfo.ca.gov/reference/4_14drug.htm

**For more information,
Contact:** [insert name, phone]

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**[insert court name] Court
Celebrates Success of Drug Courts
April, 2003**

[city, date]—[name of court] is sponsoring National Drug Court Week to recognize [name] court staff who have made significant contributions to the county's drug court program and to highlight the importance of the program to the community.

Included in the week's activities are: [list activities, days, times]

According to [name of spokesperson], the objective of National Drug Court Month is to show how the community as a whole benefits from these programs and also to honor local drug court professionals for their invaluable service to this important program. "INSERT QUOTE

[last name] added that the [name] Court has implemented several changes to enhance the drug courts, including: [list improvements]. "INSERT INFORMATION ABOUT HOW LOCAL STAFF HAVE MADE A DIFFERENCE."

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